

Living in a State of Denial: South Australia's Love-Hate Relationships with it's Past

Brian Samuels

Brian Samuels is an historian who has worked as a teacher and public servant since 1973. He developed a passion for Local and State history in his late teens and believes it has served him well in both his career and private life. In 1991 while employed by the History Trust of South Australia he compiled a leaflet, *South Australian Firsts 1836-1986*, 'to draw attention to some of South Australia's more interesting innovations and firsts'. That leaflet also solicited suggestions for 'a list of significant lasts'. Sadly, not one was received.

His paper will examine some previously claimed 'firsts' to determine their veracity and significance, reflect on the historical uses of lists of firsts in books about the State and in public statements by politicians and others, and touch on some of the impediments to innovation and using the wisdom of the past in the public service of today.

Since 1995 Brian has been Principal Heritage Officer with the Heritage Branch of the Department for Environment and Heritage, managing the Heritage Assessment Section. This paper reflects his own views and does not purport to represent the views of the Department.

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